

VZCZCXRO5750

PP RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHDA RUEHDF RUEHFL RUEHIK RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHLN
RUEHLZ RUEHPOD RUEHROV RUEHSR RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHIT #0452/01 2341435
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 211435Z AUG 08
FM AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
TO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8403
INFO RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 7874
RUEHDA/AMCONSUL ADANA PRIORITY 2373
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ISTANBUL 000452

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [OSCE](#) [TU](#) [AA](#)

SUBJECT: HONOR KILLINGS MIGRATE TO THE CITY

REF: A. 06 ADANA 216

[1](#)B. 06 ANKARA 5606

ISTANBUL 00000452 001.2 OF 002

[1](#)1. Summary and comment. A recently-released GOT report suggests the traditionally rural practice of honor killings has spread to Western Turkish cities such as Istanbul. The report concludes honor killings increased from 150 in 2002 to 231 in 2007, with 1000 honor killings between 2003 and [1](#)2007. More honor killings occurred in Istanbul than any other province. While the victims of honor killings are mostly young women, human rights experts believe the recent alleged honor killing of a gay male is a sign of a disturbing new trend. The migration of the barbaric practice puts pressure on the government to step up efforts to address the problem through education and increased attention. The report, issued by The Prime Ministry Human Rights Presidency, should help to publicize the problem and its changing demographics. End Summary and comment.

Honor Killing Practice Spreading Geographically

[1](#)2. The Prime Ministry Human Rights Presidency's July 2008 report on honor killings and domestic violence shows honor killings increased from 150 in 2002 to 231 in 2007, with 1,000 honor and "moral" killings in the last five years (January 2003 - December 2007). A total of 294 honor killings took place in Istanbul's Marmara region, while Central Anatolia reported 219 and the Aegean region 217. Of the 294 reported honor killings in the Marmara region, 106 women were murdered for forbidden relationships, 72 for having been sexually harassed, and 18 for being raped.

[1](#)3. More honor killings are now committed in Istanbul than any other province, according to the report, rising from 27 reported murders in 2006 to 53 in 2007 - equivalent to a killing each week. Most of the perpetrators migrated to the Marmara Region from eastern and southeastern Anatolia. Ayse Sucu, President of Diyanet Foundation's Women's Auxiliary Board, attributed the trend to rapid urbanization in the last 10-15 years. She blamed traditional conservative attitudes for the high incidence of honor killings, adding that migrants carry the custom with them as they move to big cities and abroad. By failing to integrate newcomers into city life and society, urbanization allows such practices to continue, Sucu said. Lawyer Fatma Benli of the women's rights organization Akder, told us that while the number of honor killings is high in Istanbul due to immigration of economic migrants from Anatolia, the numbers in southeast Anatolia are significantly underreported. She attributes

this in part to a 2004 Penal Code amendment that allows prosecutors to charge all family members who participate in planning an honor killing, rather than just the actual perpetrator, in an effort to end-run the trend of having minors carry out the murder for their families to escape harsher sentencing. Under the new rules, families are less likely to announce honor killings. Benli said one way families circumvent the law is to force the relative to commit suicide, a theory supported by the report's finding that between 2005 and 2006, 1,985 women committed suicide. Benli says that families unwilling to risk punishment for honor killings will lock a young woman in a shed with a rope, urging her to commit suicide or starve to death.

A New Trend in Honor Killing?

¶4. While the victims of honor killings are primarily young women, several contacts told us the recent killing of a gay man may signal a dangerous new trend. Twenty-six year old Ahmet Yildiz, who represented Turkey at an international gay gathering in San Francisco last year, was shot leaving a cafe in Istanbul on July 15. Fatally wounded, Yildiz crashed while trying to flee attackers. International Relations representative for the gay rights group Lambda Istanbul, Oner Ceylan, believes Yildiz was the victim of a struggle between growing civil liberties and old mentalities, resulting in what Ceylan suspects was murder by Yildiz's traditional family from Eastern Turkey. Yildiz was open about his homosexuality with his family, who disapproved of his behavior. According to Ceylan, the body remained unclaimed in the morgue until media pressure forced Yildiz's uncle to collect it on the sixth day. After honor-related murders, it is common for families to refuse to bury the victim. Yildiz's friends do not know the details of his burial, or whether

ISTANBUL 00000452 002.2 OF 002

a burial did indeed take place. Beyond collecting statements from acquaintances, Ceylan contends the police are not investigating the matter.

¶5. This is not the first reported honor killing due to sexual orientation, Ceylan noted. In 2004 a man allegedly hired an assassin to murder his brother for tainting the family honor by his homosexuality in the South Central Anatolian city of Kahramanmaraş. Both the brother and assassin were arrested and the case remains in court.

OUDKIRK